

Jones, Sr. as he begins his service as Judge with the Court of Appeals of Ohio, Eighth Appellate District. His unwavering dedication, professionalism, integrity and sense of compassion will continue to empower, uplift and strengthen the lives of every person who may find herself or himself seated before him. His tenure as the Judge of the Greater Cleveland Drug Court has made an immeasurable impact on the lives of countless individuals throughout our community, and he will continue to do so as Judge with the Eighth Appellate District of Ohio.

A TRIBUTE TO CAROLYN M.
CUSTARD

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Carolyn M. Custard and her achievements as the Principal of Cecil D. Hylton Senior High School in Woodbridge, Virginia.

Principal Custard treats her students and faculty as family. The school motto, "We are Family Working Together for Total Success" resonates through every interaction at Hylton Senior High School. There is mutual trust and respect amongst the students, parents, faculty and administration, and all strive to meet Principal Custard's signature high expectations. She leads with positivity; motivating those around her to excel with efforts that are earnest and determined.

Principal Custard's approach to education is remarkable and her success undeniable. The percentage of special education students who passed the Standards of Learning exams rose to 80% from 59% in just one year. In 2008, Ms. Custard was named the 2008 Outstanding High School Principal of Virginia, and Hylton Senior High School was recently placed in the top 5% of Newsweek's Top 1000 High Schools in the Nation.

Principal Custard preaches collaborative leadership and established the Principal's Advisory Council. Composed of parents, students and staff, the Council encourages engagement in the school's community. Principal Custard education system can only benefit as parents and students take ownership in the performance and future of their local schools.

In recognition of her innovation and sincere dedication to education, the National Association of Secondary School Principals named Principal Custard as one of their six finalists for the 2009 Principal of the Year Award.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join my endorsement of Principal Custard's leadership in our nation's education system.

COMMEMORATION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED
PEOPLE'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JOE SESTAK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the contributions of the fol-

lowing individuals, and the organizations they lead, for their consistent and essential support to my constituents in the 7th Congressional District of Pennsylvania.

I thank Darrell Jones, of West Chester; Sheila A. Carter of Darby; Reverend Albert G. Davis of the Mainline; Dr. Joan Duval-Flynn of Media; M. Lana Shells of Norristown; Jerome Whyatt Mondesire of Philadelphia; Alice H. Hammond of West Chester; and, Linda Osinupedia of Yeadon for their tireless efforts.

These 21st Century American patriots carry on the traditions of the NAACP whose mission "to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination," remains as vital today as it was when founded a century ago.

HONORING ARMTEC DEFENSE
PRODUCTS COMPANY

HON. MARY BONO MACK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Mrs. BONO MACK. Madam Speaker, it is both an honor and a privilege to congratulate Armtec Defense Products Company on their 40th anniversary. For the past four decades, this organization has worked diligently with the U.S. military to create products to protect and defend our county.

Armtec Defense Company began with a simple technical innovation, combining nitro-cellulose into inert paper products, a superior invention that remains the industry standard even today. In 1968, founder and innovator Pete DeLuca opened the Armtec facility in Coachella, California, and began production of combustible 152mm cartridge cases. This product was used by the U.S. Army for nearly 30 years on Armored Reconnaissance Vehicles, and I commend Armtec for supplying our armed forces with the vital support our troops deserve.

For the past 40 years, Armtec has developed numerous combustible ordnance products for the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps. These products are utilized by a vast majority of U.S. tank, artillery and mortar rounds in our military, and have been supplied to our forces in past military engagements such as Vietnam, Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Armtec Defense Products Company has been and continues to be a wonderful asset to the Coachella Valley. Over the decades, they have provided thousands of jobs to the local residents of the 45th Congressional District, which is crucial during these economic times. Additionally, Armtec supports numerous worthy causes throughout our community, like the U.S. Marine Scholarship Fund, Navy League, and the United Way.

Armtec Defense Products Company's dedication to our nation's military is invaluable. On behalf of the constituents of the 45th District and the greater United States, we thank you for your contributions to our country's past and future.

Again, congratulations on your 40th anniversary.

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE
FEDERAL EMPLOYEE RETIRE-
MENT SYSTEM (FERS) SICK
LEAVE EQUITY ACT OF 2009

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the bipartisan "Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) Sick Leave Equity Act" that I am offering with my colleague Representative FRANK WOLF (R-VA). The current sick leave policies for the civil service are inappropriately bifurcated between new and older systems, and the current system is costing the Federal Government millions in lost productivity each year.

Today, Federal employees enrolled in FERS may accrue annual sick leave over the course of their career, but under the current "use-it or lose-it" policy, all sick leave is eliminated at retirement. Representative WOLF and I believe that this policy serves as a disincentive to conserve sick leave—or an incentive to use sick leave at the end of careers when employees are not really sick. An August 2008 Congressional Research Service (CRS) report indicated that sick leave balances were significantly lower for FERS employees than CSRS employees, and a survey of FERS and CSRS employees showed that 85% of CSRS employees conserve as much sick leave as possible, whereas 75% of FERS employees said they would use as much sick leave as possible during their last years. The Office of Personnel Management confirmed the existence of this "FERS flu" phenomenon as well, asserting that the lost productivity and training of new employees to fill in for absent employees cost the Federal Government an estimated \$68 million annually. This lost productivity accompanies the aging workforce nearing retirement over the next ten years.

The use of sick leave is a significant problem to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Federal Government, but it is also a challenge that has been overcome before. The story of how employees in CSRS got their sick leave benefit provides insight into the same challenges the Federal Government faces today. Originally CSRS employees had no benefit—they all forfeited any unused sick leave upon retirement. As a result, Federal employees were burning their sick leave at the end of their careers. The Civil Service Commission estimated that half of all retiring Federal employees had no sick leave; Congress reported that retiring employees used an average of 40 sick leave days in their last year before retirement.

In response to this problem, in 1969, Congress changed the law to permit employees to receive credit for any accrued sick leave. This policy has remained in place for CSRS—whatever accrued sick leave an employee has, that time is added to their annuity. Not surprisingly, Federal employees began conserving sick leave. A later GAO report showed that retiring employees had significantly higher sick leave balances than those who retired before the law was changed.

The Congress's failure to learn from the past has caused history to repeat itself. When the FERS retirement system was created in 1986, Congress explicitly eliminated the sick

leave incentive, though they were cognizant of the possible consequences. Report language accompanying the new statute indicate that Congress believed that "without an incentive to save sick leave, the use of sick leave may increase substantially."

The "FERS Sick Leave Equity Act" will reverse the growing trend of using sick leave by providing the same benefit to FERS retirees that CSRS retirees currently receive. Under the proposal, all FERS-eligible employees will add their accrued sick leave to the years of service that employee has worked in the Federal Government. These years of service are part of the FERS retirement benefits calculation, providing a real incentive to accrue as much sick leave as possible.

The proposal has gained widespread endorsement by Federal employees who know the problem firsthand: the managers who experience the problem every day and the organizations that know the negative effect of the "use-it or lose-it" policy. The supporting organizations include the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), American Postal Workers Union (APWU), FAA Managers Association (FAAMA), Federal Managers Association (FMA), Federally Employed Women (FEW), Government Managers Coalition (GMC), Senior Executives Association (SEA), National Council of Social Security Management Associations (NCSSMA), Professional Managers Association (PMA), National Association of Government Employees (NAGE), National Association of Postal Supervisors (NAPS), National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE), National Rural Letter Carriers Association (NRLCA), and the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU). I am proud and grateful to have this support for the proposal.

Madam Speaker, we need to incentivize the accrual of sick leave, not to keep a policy in place that encourages people to call in sick in the weeks leading up to retirement. It will save the Federal Government millions while providing sick leave parity for FERS employees and their CSRS counterparts. I look forward to working with the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the full House of Representatives on this pressing issue.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS AND WATERFALLS NETWORK REAUTHORIZATION

HON. JOHN P. SARBANES

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to reauthorize the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network (CBGN), a program that connects those who live in the Bay watershed to the natural, cultural and historic resources of the Bay and thereby encourages individual stewardship of these resources.

The legislation I am introducing today is identical to the bill that passed the House of Representatives by an overwhelming and bipartisan vote of 321 to 86 during the 110th Congress. Unfortunately, we were not able to

get the bill to the President's desk but I am hopeful that we will complete our work on this legislation during the 111th Congress.

Since 2000, Gateways has grown to include more than 150 sites and over 1500 miles of established and developing water trails in six states and the District of Columbia. Through grants to parks, volunteer groups, wildlife refuges, historic sites, museums, and water trails, the Network ties these sites together to provide meaningful experiences and foster citizen stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay.

Madam Speaker, for a very modest investment, the Gateways program helps foster the citizen stewardship that will be necessary to advance Bay cleanup and maintain the gains we hope to make in the coming years. By reauthorizing the Gateways program and providing access to the beautiful sites that make up the network, we can help develop the next generation of environmental stewards, which is one of the best ways to truly "Save the Bay." I hope that my colleagues will support this legislation so the Park Service can continue to play a key role in the Bay cleanup effort.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA LEGISLATIVE AUTONOMY ACT OF 2009

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, last week, I introduced the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act. Today, I am introducing its fraternal twin, the District of Columbia Legislative Autonomy Act of 2009, to end discriminatory and unnecessary congressional review of District of Columbia legislation. I introduce these bills in sequence because Congress makes a mockery of self-government when it denies the citizens of the nation's capital the right to enact a local budget, as well as civil and criminal laws, free from interference.

In 2007, this bill was passed by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and the Budget Autonomy bill was cleared by the subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service and District of Columbia that year as well. However, I decided to delay taking these bills to the floor because of threatened debilitating amendments and possible difficulties getting President Bush to sign these bills.

The legislative autonomy bill would eliminate the 30 day and 60 day congressional review period for civil and criminal bills, respectively. Because the period of Congressional review involves only days when Congress is in session, not ordinary calendar days, bills signed by the mayor laws typically do not become law for months. A required hold on all D.C. bills forces the D.C. City Council to pass most legislation using a cumbersome and complicated process in which bills are passed concurrently on an emergency, temporary, and permanent basis to ensure that the operations of this large and rapidly changing city continue uninterrupted. Because of the complications and timeframes involved, some bills do not become law at all. The Legislative Autonomy Act would eliminate the need for the D.C. City Council to engage in this Byzantine process.

The current law is an obsolete, demeaning, and cumbersome mechanism, which Congress

no longer uses, and seldom used in the past. Yet, the D.C. City Council continues to be bound by Section 602 of the Home Rule Act, and therefore continues to abide by its awkward and debilitating rules. Our bill would do no more than align D.C. City Council and congressional practices. Instead of the cumbersome formal filing of disapproval resolutions that require processing in the House and the Senate, the Congress has preferred to use appropriations attachments. It is particularly unfair to require the D.C. City Council to engage in the tortuous process prescribed by the Home Rule Act that Congress itself has discarded. My bill would eliminate the formal review system that long ago died of old age and disuse. Congress has walked away from the layover review and should allow the city to do the same.

Today's bill, of course, does not prevent review of District laws by Congress. Under Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, the House and the Senate could scrutinize every piece of legislation passed by the D.C. City Council, if desired, and could change or strike such legislation under its plenary constitutional authority over the District. However, since the Home Rule Act became effective in 1974, of the more than 2,000 legislative acts that have been passed by the D.C. City Council and signed into law by the Mayor, only three resolutions to disapprove of a D.C. bill have been enacted, and two of these involved a distinct federal interest. Placing a hold on our 2,000 D.C. bills has not only proved unnecessary, but has meant untold wasted costs in terms of money, staff and time to the District and the Congress. Although 36 years of Home Rule Act history shows that congressional review is unnecessary, this bill merely eliminates the automatic hold placed on local legislation and the need for the D.C. City Council to use a phantom process passed for the convenience of Congress, but one that Congress has eliminated in all but law.

Congress continually urges the District government to pursue efficiency and savings. It is time for Congress to do its part to promote greater efficiency, both here and in the District, by streamlining its own redundant and discarded review processes. Eliminating the hold on D.C. legislation would not only save scarce D.C. taxpayer revenue, but would benefit the city's bond rating, which is affected by the shadow of congressional review that delays the finality of District legislation. At the same time, Congress would not give up any of its plenary power because the Congress may intervene into any District matter at any time under the Constitution.

The limited legislative autonomy granted in this bill would allow the District to realize the greater measure of meaningful self-government and Home Rule it deserves and has more than earned in the 36 years since the Home Rule Act became effective. I urge my colleagues to pass this important measure.

HONORING ALISHA YOUNG,
YOUTHBUILD LEADER

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, today I wish to recognize a dedicated and committed